



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

ALASKA FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER
NATIONAL MARINE MAMMAL LABORATORY

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March 4, 2008 F/AKC3:PLB

Mr. John Goodwin, Chairman
Ice Seal Committee
c/o Alaska Nanuuq Commission
P.O. 946
Nome, Alaska 99762

Dear John,

In continuation of the very successful partnership between National Marine Mammal Laboratory (NMML) and the Ice Seal Committee, NMML is again requesting the assistance of the Ice Seal Committee to identify Alaska Native participants for upcoming research cruises.

We are fortunate to have ice seal research projects aboard three Bering Sea cruises this year. Similar to last year, our team's main objective will be to capture and instrument spotted and ribbon seals with satellite-linked data recorders (SDRs), which are used to provide information on a seal's movements, diving behavior, and dependence on sea ice. The SDRs are glued to the hair on the animal's back (the SDR will fall off when the animal next molts), or attached to a tag in the seal's rear flipper. In addition, visual surveys of marine mammals will be made from the ships and from a helicopter.

Descriptions of the different research cruises

Name: POLAR SEA-08-01
Dates: April 6-25, 2008
Ports of call: Departs from, Kodiak and ends in Nome, AK.
Description: The Coast Guard cutter *Polar Sea* will operate in the Bering Sea in support of ice seal research. Our group will conduct aerial sightings surveys from the ship's helicopters whenever possible. The *Polar Sea* is an ice breaker and much of the prospective cruise track includes time in the pack ice.
Participants: 1 –Alaska Native
3-5 –NMML scientists (Michael Cameron, team leader)



Name: OSCAR DYSON-Ice Seals
Dates: April 9-29, 2008
Ports of call: Departs from Kodiak and returns to Dutch Harbor, AK.
Description: The cruise will be aboard the NOAA research vessel, the *Oscar Dyson*. The *Dyson* is not an ice breaker and will not



sail in areas of heavy pack ice. As such, the northern extent of the cruise will be the southern ice edge as it exists in April.

Participants: 1 –Alaska Native
8 –NMML scientists (Peter Boveng, team leader)

Name: MILLER FREEMAN-Ice Seals

Dates: June 10-30, 2008

Ports of call: Departs from, and returns to Dutch Harbor, AK.

Description: The cruise will be aboard the NOAA research vessel, the *Miller Freeman*. The *Miller Freeman* is not an ice breaker and will not sail in areas of heavy pack ice. As such, the northern extent of the cruise will be the margins of the Bering Sea and possibly Chukchi Sea ice as they exist in June.



Participants: 1 –Alaska Native
8 –NMML scientists (Michael Cameron, team leader)

In nominating potential participants, please provide a brief biographical sketch and contact information. To be considered for the cruise, all nominated participants must be prepared to make a firm commitment that they will participate in the cruise if selected. We need this commitment because making last minute substitutions of participants is not feasible. While the cruise dates provided are considered firm, participants should be prepared for a shift in schedule that could require them change their departure and arrival dates by as much as a week. In addition, cruise participants need to be willing to work as a full member of the NMML research team. This will involve conducting visual surveys of marine mammals while the ship is underway, navigating among pack ice in inflatable boats, jumping out onto ice floes to capture seals, heavy lifting and other manual labor as necessary, including climbing rope ladders in excess of 25 feet.

Pending availability of funds, and approval to transfer funds to the Ice Seal Committee, I would propose to cover the costs of:

- 1) A stipend for each Alaska Native participant,
- 2) Transportation to and from Dutch Harbor and Kodiak Island, and Nome, AK.
- 3) Meals and lodging for all participants while in transit and while aboard the research vessels.

Due to requirements of the ship's protocols we must provide the *Polar Sea* and *Oscar Dyson* with the names of participants by mid-March, and shortly thereafter for the *Miller Freeman* cruise.

We believe that these cruises and seal projects will provide a great opportunity for strengthening the collaborative nature of Alaska ice seal research. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Peter L. Boveng
Polar Ecosystems Program Leader